

Amendment 2 flouts 'values'

The other day I overheard some people assessing reactions against Amendment 2 — saying how arrogant it is for homosexuals to think they deserve special privileges. At that moment it struck me how easily twisted an issue can become, to the point that the most ludicrous or unjust cause may be artfully molded into a persuasive argument. Even the title, "Colorado for Family Values" has a wholesome sound to it.

I recently read in your letter section arguments from a Tamara Swindler, who seems to honestly believe that Amendment 2 stands for freedom. She voiced concern that if Amendment 2 fails, a flood of legislation will invariably emerge, legislation that — among other things — will threaten her church's freedom of expression. She, too, has managed to contort the issue, focusing attention on the inequity of special privileges resulting in "the loss of rights of all."

Of course, Amendment 2 is not about special privileges; it is about basic human rights, or rather, the outright denial of them. Their proponents argue that because gays "choose" their lifestyle, they should not ever be given special consideration. Though I doubt very seriously that choice has much to do with being gay, I agree that no one should receive special consideration, as long as they are not victims of "special prejudice and discrimination," which the very existence of Amendment 2 on the ballot betrays.

There is nothing special about the right to live where you choose, to be treated with dignity, to receive equal consideration for employment based on your qualifications. Amendment 2's overt intention is to construct a blockade against those rights. One might just as fairly draft an amendment to prohibit legislation protecting your rights if you are, say, a car dealer. Happily, car dealers are not often discriminated against. But if I were a car dealer, and I was turned away from living in the North End or attending a church because of my association with that lifestyle, I'd be upset, especially if the Colorado for Tasteful Advertising Amendment supporting such discrimination was pending.

I am very grateful that I'm not gay, as I've seen too many friends live through heartbreaking stories of persecution and prejudice — even from their own families — when the only "choice" they made was whether or not to be honest about themselves. But whether one is gay out of choice or a state of being, I believe in my heart that they deserve as much love, trust and respect as anyone else.

I feel certain that Amendment 2's backers would agree with what I consider basic American values: that the issues of freedom and equality have always epitomized our country's highest ideals. I find it tragic that, through a twisting of the truth rooted in fear and misunderstanding, there are those such as Swindler and other advocates of Amendment 2, who would undermine the very ideals they pretend to stand for.

— John Standish
Colorado Springs

LETTERS WELCOME

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Syria who has called for reconciliation with Christians opposed to Syrian intervention.

Berri, in his acceptance speech, called for reconciliation with right-wing Christians who had boycotted the general elections. They argued that holding elections while Syrian troops control two-thirds of the country would turn Lebanon into Syria's satellite. The elections, which were held in four stages from Aug. 23 to Oct. 11, produced an overwhelmingly pro-Syrian Parliament.

"Let bygones be bygones," Berri said. "This Parliament does not mean victory for one section of the Lebanese people against the other. Lebanon cannot survive without unity."

Berri, 54, pledged to devote his four-year term to reclaiming the border enclave in southern Lebanon that Israel has occupied since 1985. As he took the oath, a pair of Israeli warplanes buzzed Beirut, sending sonic booms through

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Kuwaiti Parliament for first time since

Associated Press

KUWAIT — The first postwar Parliament was elected and elected as its speaker the man who last Parliament was dissolved in 1986 for being too critical of the government.

Ahmed al-Saadoun, 58, won 46 votes against 13 for his only opponent, Abdul-Aziz al-Adassani, an independent. Crown Prince Saad al-Abdullah, who also is prime minister, abstained.

The emir, Sheik Jaber al-Ahmed al-Sabah, who dissolved the Parliament six years ago, called on deputies and ministers to join forces to rebuild and defend Kuwait.

"Cooperation between the legislative and executive authorities is not only a demand, it is a duty," he said at the session.

Elections held early this month brought an unprecedented majority of 35 opposition deputies to the 50-seat house. Six opposition deputies named to the Cabinet also constitute the largest number of Parliament members ever included in the government, which has 16 ministers. The previous maximum was three.

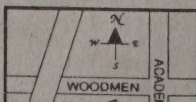
But the opposition complained that the key positions in the new Cabinet, including defense, interior and foreign affairs, remained in the hands of the al-Sabah family, which has ruled Kuwait for 250 years.

The Parliament was expected immediately to start reviewing more than 500 laws passed by the government during its absence, including a \$24 billion plan to buy out bad debts held by the emirate's banks.

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